

Sport Events Tourism: An Approach to the Portuguese Case

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Abstract – Sports events assume a major importance in tourism. This relevance results particularly from the fact that there are numerous disciplines that can be practiced and nowadays tourists are traveling around the world to participate in multiple sport events. Considering that, it becomes imperative to study the different types of involvement that tourists may have in all of the involved processes. Particularly, Portugal is a country holding excellent natural conditions for Tourism and for the practice of a considerable number of different sporting activities, many of them possible to be held all year round. This study's intention is to define a framework model which will allow the understanding of the main touristic motivations for tourists' participation in sports events activities, particularly considering the Gammon & Robinson's (1997) classification and Weed & Bull (2004). The main objective of the study is to create a consistent theoretical basis for the study of these events. There is already a possible outcome for the study based on its present stage resulting that, according to either the responsible agents

for the sector and the ones for the specific described events, sports events in Portugal have been increasing and that Portugal is being much demanded for this kind of events.

Keywords – Sports Events Tourism, Portugal, Land Event, Water Event, Air Event, Motivations, Place, Activity, People.

1. Introduction

In recent years, tourism has increased very consistently. According to the World Tourism Organization UNWTO (2016), 2015 was the 6th consecutive year of growth for world tourism, as pictured in table 1.

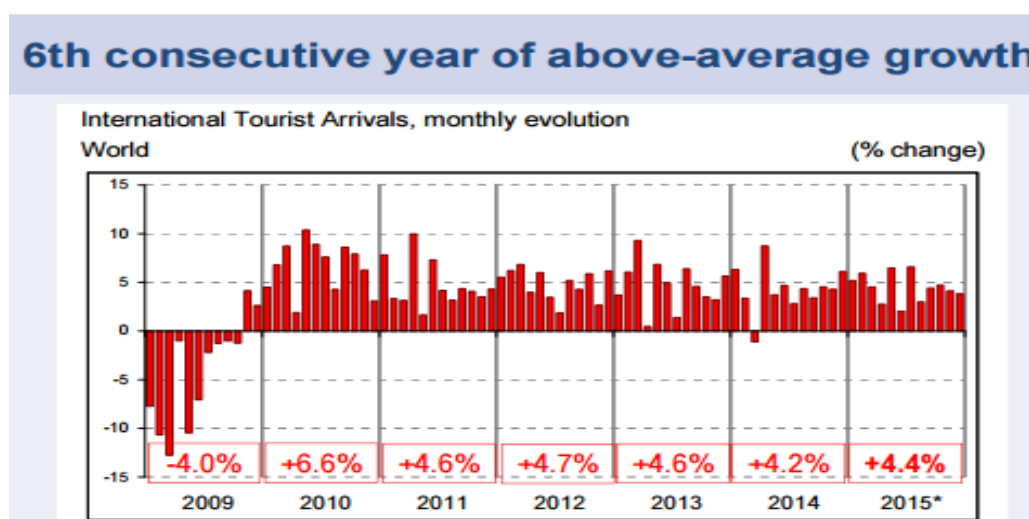


Table 1: International Tourist Arrivals, monthly evolution World
Source: World Tourism Organization (UNWTO), Jan.2016

There has been an increase in the search for innovative perspectives in this area and one of the fastest growing forms of tourism over the last years is sports tourism.

Due to the economic value of the sports cluster the present work intends basically to discuss the application of a framework based on such a proposal and, considering the present phase of the study as a whole, to present the fundamentals of the theme in an area with excellent conditions to be developed and with insufficient discussion or theoretical developments.

This way, Portugal has been chosen as a study object, in which a mixed approach will be used by collecting in-depth interviews of responsible managers of sport event companies in different areas such as in land, water and air events (the studied cases are Urban Trail Lisbon, Up and Down the Guadiana River Sail Regatta, National Parasailing Festival). A questionnaire will then be applied to participant tourists in terms of all the referred sports events. The sample selection methods were of convenience, since surveys are made through a questionnaire sent via e-mail by companies which organize these events. The object of this analysis results from a work carried out in the year 2015, with a total of 8300 participants. The results will then be

statistically treated through the SPSS software program. It was intended, first, to analyze available data for these events in Portugal, in general. The ongoing study attempt to work the available data for the aforementioned events, letting for the future the treatment of all the statistical analysis of the data obtained with the above described process.

This paper has the following structure: first, the sport events tourism impact is presented followed by the specific events to be studied. Secondly, a characterization will be made of the tourists' motivations. These factors will be analyzed, allowing the creation of a common thread and giving a contribution for the evolution of the tourism phenomenon. Lastly, the conclusions found and the questions derived from these considerations will be addressed.

2. Recent Statistics for Tourism and Sport Events Tourism

When looking at the UNWTO Confidence Index, results remain largely positive for 2016, though at a somewhat lower level when compared to 2014 and 2015. A projected growth of 4% in international tourist arrivals worldwide is expected in 2016, based on the current trend and this outlook by UNWTO.

International tourism: projection full year 2016			
	Actual data		Projection 2016
	2015	Average 2005-2014	
World	4.4%	+3.8%	+3.5% and +4.5%
Europe	5.0%	+2.8%	+3.5% and +4.5%
Americas	4.9%	+3.5%	+4% and +5%
Asia and the Pacific	4.8%	+6.2%	+4% and +5%
Middle East	3.1%	5.2%	+2% and +5%
Africa	-3.3%	5.0%	+2% and +5%

Table 2: International tourism: projection full year 2016

Source: World Tourism Organization (UNWTO) Jan.2016

On an European level, international tourists' arrivals have reached a total of 583,6 million, representing 51,4% of the total arrivals. Comparing

to the previous year, the arrival of tourists in Europe translated into a 3% increase, lower than the last 2 years (4, 9% in 2013 and 3, 9% in 2012).

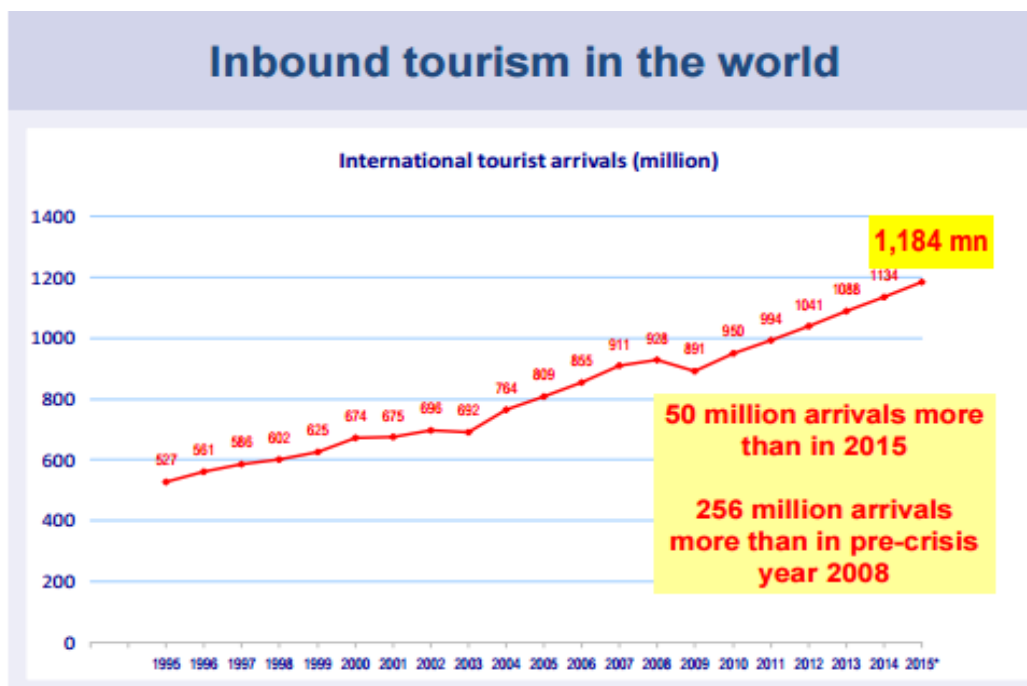


Chart 1: Inbound tourism in the world

Source: World Tourism Organization (UNWTO) Jan. 2016

According to Genç. & Filipe (2016), “Portugal is one of the 20th most competitive tourism destinations in the world, ranked in the 18th place in the World Economic Forum (2011) Index, what shows how important tourism is as economic activity in Portugal”.

As a matter of fact, according to the 2014 World Economic Forum’s Travel and Tourism

Competitiveness Report for 2015, Portugal remains in a climbing trend and reaches 15th place in a rank of 141 countries. The ambitious improvement program the country has adopted seems to have started getting results as gains appear across the board, particularly in areas related to the functioning of the goods market.

Rank	Country/Economy	Value
1	Spain	5.31
2	France	5.24
3	Germany	5.22
4	United States	5.12
5	United Kingdom	5.12
6	Switzerland	4.99
7	Australia	4.98
8	Italy	4.98
9	Japan	4.94
10	Canada	4.92
11	Singapore	4.86
12	Austria	4.82
13	Hong Kong SAR	4.68
14	Netherlands	4.67
15	Portugal	4.64
16	New Zealand	4.64
17	China	4.54
18	Iceland	4.54
19	Ireland	4.53
20	Norway	4.52

Table 3: The travel & tourism competitiveness Index 2015 Ranking

Source: World Tourism Organization (UNWTO) Jan. 2016

When a reference is made to sports tourism, there is a series of parts involved, all of them being driving forces for a number of activities in the place where the event happens. Given that each country has a few popular categories, and each category has its own specific characteristics, according to Hinch & Higham (2001) sports can be considered as a cultural icon of a certain country or destination, e. g. ice hockey in Canada and Nordic ski in Norway.

Portugal is no exception and although there has been a decline in economic growth since 2013, with a consequent decrease of the Gross Domestic Product (GDP), the touristic activity has presented an evolution over the years as reported in tables 4, 5 and 6, presented below, in accordance to the Bank of Portugal data relating to the “Travel and Tourism” numbers from the balance of payments, which can be easily visualized in chart 1, comparing the values.

Millions €													
Country of Residence	2013												
	jan	fev	mar	abr	mai	jun	jul	ago	set	out	nov	dez	Total Pos
Germany	44,0	49,3	65,0	74,4	88,3	79,6	108,2	107,1	112,4	102,8	67,0	63,3	961,4 4
Angola	47,5	39,2	46,7	43,5	36,9	13,1	46,6	46,5	43,8	38,0	49,5	62,7	513,9 5
Belgium	10,7	9,9	11,2	17,7	20,1	18,6	44,2	32,6	27,3	21,6	13,0	23,2	250,1 9
Brazil	31,9	25,6	24,2	26,0	37,1	45,6	49,1	35,0	36,1	38,6	27,9	27,4	404,4 7
Spain	57,7	56,5	79,0	73,6	84,3	79,1	131,8	174,6	111,8	98,8	82,0	105,5	1.134,6 3
EUA	23,2	22,3	30,5	34,1	57,1	59,9	77,1	50,7	49,8	41,2	27,7	30,7	504,0 6
France	77,8	69,4	81,9	114,6	127,6	103,3	194,9	419,3	140,0	117,3	85,6	136,8	1.668,5 1
Netherlands	16,3	19,2	22,2	24,6	36,3	33,1	59,6	44,8	38,8	30,8	17,7	19,8	363,1 8
United Kingdom	69,5	65,8	82,3	108,6	140,6	147,1	171,6	198,7	193,6	168,8	86,4	74,1	1.507,1 2
Switzerland	11,9	10,1	15,7	17,3	18,4	15,6	36,7	26,6	26,4	22,1	13,1	18,6	232,4 10
Other	75,9	77,0	107,3	128,5	164,4	155,6	232,4	208,1	182,4	165,8	103,3	109,4	1.710,2
Global Total	466,4	444,3	565,9	662,8	811,0	750,5	1.152,1	1.344,0	962,5	845,6	573,2	671,3	9.249,6

Millions €													
Country of Residence	2014												
	jan	fev	mar	abr	mai	jun	jul	ago	set	out	nov	dez	Total
Germany	51,2	51,3	68,0	77,9	94,8	92,0	100,9	130,8	146,6	121,0	76,2	83,5	1.094,0
Angola	50,4	40,3	34,1	57,8	49,8	25,0	58,7	61,5	62,1	58,7	48,9	68,5	615,8
Belgium	12,7	10,9	13,8	20,8	24,0	25,0	54,4	43,8	34,2	24,5	19,4	27,7	311,2
Brazil	37,9	18,3	25,6	28,6	34,2	20,0	26,0	20,4	39,9	38,3	27,1	27,1	343,5
Spain	60,4	60,0	69,0	88,7	107,5	93,7	144,6	195,1	127,6	110,5	85,0	130,0	1.272,2
EUA	14,0	22,5	20,6	32,7	62,2	32,6	80,4	47,4	53,9	47,1	22,2	32,5	468,0
France	83,2	71,1	88,6	126,0	145,1	119,9	205,5	468,0	173,9	130,0	87,9	145,1	1.844,3
Netherlands	15,1	19,0	30,8	35,5	36,7	33,3	56,7	61,3	49,5	44,1	9,7	31,1	422,8
United Kingdom	72,6	77,5	95,0	133,9	159,3	176,8	215,9	216,4	225,6	186,5	104,8	84,1	1.748,3
Switzerland	14,8	11,2	15,0	21,9	21,4	18,5	37,9	34,4	28,6	23,7	13,4	21,9	262,7
Other	103,5	95,9	109,0	153,6	175,6	198,2	283,5	240,2	207,3	190,2	137,3	117,0	2.011,3
Global Total	515,8	478,0	569,4	777,3	910,6	834,9	1.264,5	1.519,2	1.149,2	974,6	631,8	768,5	10.393,9

Country of
Residence

Millions €

	2015												Total
	jan	fev	mar	abr	mai	jun	jul	ago	set	out	nov	dez	
Germany	60,2	58,7	78,1	102,3	110,2	103,0	126,2	136,1	160,4	139,9	86,0		1.161,0
Angola	65,7	50,0	47,1	59,8	55,0	33,9	45,1	36,8	32,5	31,0	31,4		488,3
Belgium	14,0	14,2	16,2	28,1	29,5	28,1	61,2	46,7	36,1	27,1	20,4		321,5
Brazil	45,5	22,9	22,5	27,2	35,9	38,1	44,1	20,0	35,0	32,4	27,0		350,5
Spain	77,4	71,6	93,5	104,9	105,4	100,8	172,7	218,1	140,8	139,8	89,1		1.314,1
EUA	15,4	17,1	23,8	32,5	69,9	49,3	89,0	55,2	58,2	44,8	31,9		487,3
France	90,3	75,8	91,2	142,6	147,9	130,8	239,3	491,8	187,5	149,7	87,6		1.834,4
Netherlands	15,9	30,5	30,9	40,1	46,4	43,8	78,3	61,9	53,1	50,7	26,1		477,6
United Kingdom	78,2	84,8	102,6	142,8	190,8	190,9	255,8	240,1	257,5	224,3	133,9		1.901,6
Switzerland	19,3	11,7	16,1	23,5	22,8	19,7	41,7	38,3	29,6	28,4	15,9		266,9
Other	111,3	106,3	134,4	161,8	190,7	182,8	264,9	265,0	236,7	207,7	133,4		1.994,9
Global Total	593,0	543,5	656,3	865,5	1.004,7	921,2	1.418,1	1.610,0	1.227,4	1.075,7	682,7		10.598,1

Tables 4, 5 and 6: Tourism revenues from the balance sheet item “Travel and Tourism” (which includes assets and services acquired by the travelers) from the balance of payments correspondent to 2013 through 2015.

Source: Adapted from Bank of Portugal, March 2016

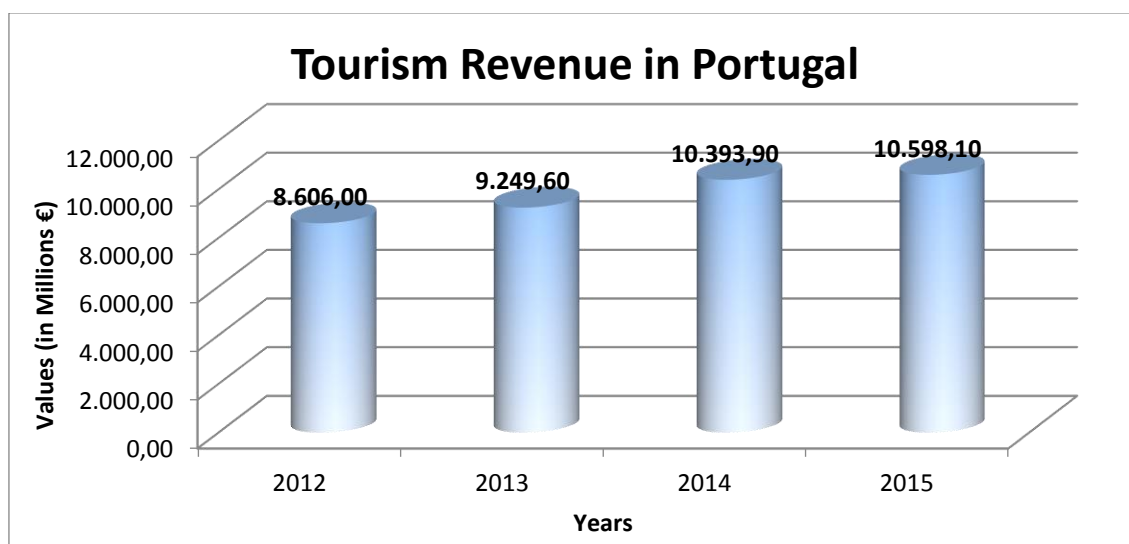


Chart 2- Tourism Revenue Values in Portugal years 2012 to 2015

Source: Adapted from Bank of Portugal, March 2016

Whereas there are no statistics available regarding sport events tourism, Getz (2008), claims that “sports event tourism became firmly established in the 1990s and has been expanding explosively, establishing targets”.

Some authors have defined sports tourism throughout time; Gibson (1998) defined sport tourism as “leisure-based travel that takes individuals temporarily outside of their home communities to

participate in physical activities, to watch physical activities, or to venerate attractions associated with physical activities”. This definition clearly illustrates the various types of targets covered within the same sport, each with its own interests and moving according to the same, boosting several touristic interests. This scenery is repeated as many times as the number of existing sports.

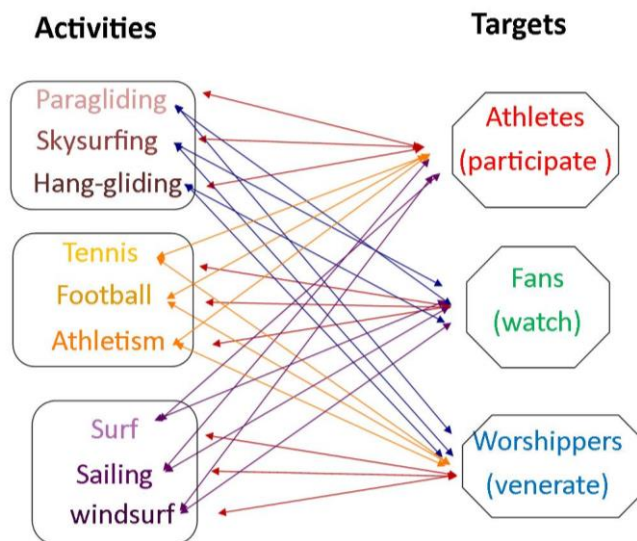


Fig.1-Example of the interaction between the various sports and their targets

Source: Own elaboration

Besides the definition of Sports Tourism, Gibson (1998) has also divided it in three major groups:

- Nostalgia sports tourism refers to travelling related to sports attractions (stadiums, museums, etc).
- Active sports tourism, tourists want to participate in sports events which can assume a wide variety of categories: golf, tennis, fishing, ski, surfing, running, etc. It is yet possible to have another subdivision: Active participants and hobbyists. The first group is composed by amateurs, travelling to take part in competitions of their chosen sport, while the second group plays their sport as a mere form of leisure.
- Event sports tourism, regarded as remarkable events, such as the Olympic Games or the World Soccer Championship. The development of mega-events was a product that had a major influence in the growth of Sports and Tourism in the twentieth century. It is possible to consider people who travel intentionally to watch such an event or those who are in the area for a completely different reason and end up knowing about it and are curious to watch it.

This way, sports tourism always includes a travelling component, which is an indispensable prerequisite for touristic activities, to which an element of sporting character is added.

Events are a major area within sports tourism, as they create a significant economic impact through the consumption of touristic products which are inherent to the arrival of thousands of participants associated to these sports events. For instance, it is enough only to recall two of the world's larger regular events: the Olympic Games and the World Soccer Championship. However, it must be referred that not all sports events have a regular character.

This segment is yet still understudied when compared to other tourism segments, maybe due to a possible lower potential and for that reason in Portugal there are no studies or statistics available when contacting our competent authorities.

Portugal however, is a country with a great potential for this type of tourism, due to its mild and pleasant climate, suitable for sports activities in an open environment, its coastal and mountain territory with plenty of flora and because it is already on the

way to becoming an international reference in a few sports, such as football (soccer), golf and surf.

This diversity and the fact that is still in the beginning of this tourism practice, are the exact reasons why it is important to study what tourists search for when coming to play sports in Portugal and what are the motivations and experiences they want to obtain, so that revenue can be increased through a guided offer according to the tourists' desires.

Gammon & Robinson (1997) have divided sports motivations as follows:

- First, when individuals displace themselves to watch or practice sports exclusively, with no other related touristic activities;
- Second, the individual displaces himself with the intent to practice sports but also to enjoy the place as a tourist.
- Lastly, the incidental or unintentional motivation, when the individual goes on vacation to a certain destination and ends up enjoying a physical activity because of a welcoming opportunity is found.

After defining the motivation, a filter of the visitor through the type of sports tourism searched has to be made, and also here Gammon & Robinson (1997) using their previously referred classification, have divided the tourists' motivations in "hard" and "soft", depending on whether they are competitive or recreational sports, within sport tourism, thus contributing to describe motivations and experiences of sports tourists. They stated clearly, however, that at this point it is still necessary a wider and more in-depth study about their respective interactions: "Research now needs to focus more on these categories to further examine motives of the sport tourist and to assess in more general terms the utility of the framework".

The present paper intends thus to constitute a contribution in the search and collection of information about the sports tourism events

phenomenon in Portugal, through the analysis of three sports events in this country.

3. Tourism Sports Events Impact in Portugal

Nowadays, tourism is one of the key areas for the Portuguese economy, holding an extreme relevance which has continuously been revealing enormous potential to the national corporate sector. According to the specialists that represent the tourism barometer panel of the IPDT (Tourism Institute) - see IPDT (2015) the tourism industry confidence index was one of the highest ever the last month of December 2015. The 2016 perspectives appear thus to be high, with results above those of 2015. Jorge Máximo, Sports Alderman, has unveiled that Lisbon is preparing an application for European Sports Capital, possibly for the year 2021. There is currently a trend where tourism is analyzed through hotel occupancy rate and average tourist expenditure. These are the most frequently used indicators, although not the most suited in this specific case, since they represent only a portion of the amount spent by the tourist and sports tourism is integrated in the remaining local offer.

Scientific studies made on sports tourism events nationwide are quite scarce and there is no authority that assures for itself the comparable statistics of this type of events. All the existing sports federations would have to be contacted in order to obtain figures by sports' type and even these are not specifically targeted for tourism events.

There has been a study on sports events in Lisbon made by the Town Hall in 2015 and from the few available figures it is known, through this study, that major sports events held in Lisbon from September 2014 to August 2015 had an economic impact between 93 and 103 million euros. Of that total, over 33 million euros relate to expenditures made directly in the city by athletes, managers, technical people and viewers.

An undeniable truth is that Portugal has natural resources for a wide range of activities. Other than beaches and feasible sports allowed, its quality for the practice of several types of sports stands out, as well as the weather conditions allowing the completion of events all year round which does not happen in most countries.

For this reason, a decision to gather data at this empirical stage of the study was made, in order to be able to compare some results, although in a minimal scale, and reach some conclusions in three specific sports events in Portugal. These events have been chosen based on Aspas' (2000) classification, where sports can be developed in land, water and air and an attempt was also made to cover the largest area possible in the country, with the events being chosen in the North, Centre and South regions of Continental Portugal. This happened because Lisbon, the Capital began to be the driving force of sports events due to its infrastructures but nowadays more cities are also starting to create events in order to attract more tourists. Although these cities may not possess much influence they end up by reaching out to the more interested people due to its conditions for sports practice. All these events are considered recreational participation events.

More than intending to reach any final conclusions in this first approach, some interviews were conducted to sports tourism events managers companies in order to try and understand some trends that have been emerging over the years.

In the obtained responses, one can perceive that there has been an increase in the number of sports events, which began by being a "lifestyle" trend combined with healthy eating, but has actually come to stay while is still considered as an option to a parallel stressed life. It began with racing becoming a friday night program. The adhesion to running events has been increasing and in 2015 entry figures have hit a record number, according to Carlos Mória, President

of Portugal's Marathon Club. He also claims that these figures can still increase, since only 17% of the 30% of Portuguese that practice sports, play this activity. But there are a lot more sports to be played outdoors: hiking, sailing, canoeing or biking, among others. Being many times solo players, they enjoy going to events to understand and keep up with the evolution along with other participants. That is where sports events organizing companies appear, organizing the event from registration to logistical tasks accompaniment as well as security, venue and result launch.

Due to the above mentioned items, events have had a significant impact in the economy with the increase of touristic flows, which end up by serving as promoting vehicles for the country, helping to break a seasonality that is characteristic of this industry. These participants want to get to know the place and many times they bring other people with them.

4. Characterization of the Chosen Events

As mentioned above, these events were selected to cover the country from North to South, thereby covering the three possible physical media: air, land, and water, according to the characterization drawn by Aspas (2000). This is only possible thanks to Portugal's positive climatic conditions and also thanks to the landscape and extensive coast.

According to Hinch & Higham (2004), the experiential value of these sports events depends widely on the landscape and weather conditions where they take place.

Portugal is relying in regular or occasional sports events, attracting strong media projection for Portugal and raising a specific touristic flow.

In general, sports events represent a major role for tourism offer, reducing seasonality and creating positive economic impact derived from the event's organization and realization. Its organization

comprehends a complex diversity of companies in the widest range of activities, from job creation to ancillary services so that the participants are allowed to undertake their activity. However it is important to note that most of the economic impacts derive not only from the sports event itself but also from the supporting infrastructures.

The economic impacts of sport tourism are difficult to be measured, being one of the most researched aspect but least understood in this area of tourism. According to the organizers of the three events presented hereafter, the combination of the two, sport and tourism, has a significant economic impact in their regions.

Land Event



Source: <http://coconafalda.sapo.pt/passatempo-agua-serra-da-estrela-e-meo-1826433>

Urban Trail Lisboa – Urban Trail Lisboa – This event was first held in Lisbon, in 2012, and currently takes place in 4 more towns: Leiria, Coimbra, Porto, and Sintra. This concept allies sports, namely a running competition (12 km) to the discovery of historic heritage, trailing several landmarks in the urban centres. The mission is to promote and develop tourism and sports in a sustainable way around towns. The Lisbon trail is a very touristic one, excellent to get acquainted with the typical Lisbon quarters and the belvederes, passing through historic and bohemian locations of

the capital, filled with staircases and steep climbs, with a marked city trail concept. Every year there is a different trail, so that the participants who take the competition more than once enjoy a surprise element and can know other interesting points. Jorge Azevedo, in charge of the organization of Urban Trail, states: “These competitions allow to discover the cities, to run or walk safely and calmly. For sure it is a revigorating adventure not only for the locals but also for tourists looking for active holidays, allowing them to get acquainted with the more secret

corners, the historic and cultural heritage whilst enjoying a unique landscape”.

It takes place in September and October.

Urban Trail Lisboa	2012	2013	2014	2015
No. of participants per race	8000	8000	8000	8000
No. of editions per year in the country	2	2	3	5

Chart 3 - Number of participants from 2012 to 2015

Source: Own elaboration

Water Event



Source: <https://www.nauticapress.com/em-agosto-a-tradicional-subida-e-descida-internacional-do-guadiana-a-vela/>

Regata à Vela, subida e descida Rio Guadiana - The “Up and Down the Guadiana River Sail Regatta” (32nd edition in 2016), in Vila Real de Santo António, had its first edition in 1983. It is the 3rd oldest regatta in the Iberian Peninsula, being organized with Spain, since the Guadiana River crosses both countries. Its route happens in the course of two days, going up on a Saturday and coming back (descent) on Sunday, going through Vila Real de Santo António, Ayamonte, Alcoutim and Sanlúcar de Guadiana. On Saturday night there is always a party for all the participants to socialize. This event is thus

a mix of sports and conviviality with the Guadiana playing the host.

The event is a gathering moment of great conviviality between pilots of all ages and nationalities, allowing the viewers the unique possibility in Europe to follow the event live throughout the entire route, keeping up with the boat fleet on the riverside road.

The competition is opened to any boat from all internationally recognized classes, with a handicap equal or above the Optimist, as well as Open class boards. There is still a regatta for cruise boats. It happens during the month of August.

Guadiana Regatta	2012	2013	2014	2015
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Number of boats	140	130	120	130
Number of participants	275	240	250	250

Chart 4 - Number of participants from 2012 to 2015

*Source: Own elaboration***Air Event**

Source: <http://www.aldeiashistoricasdeportugal.com/es/destacados/xi-festival-de-parapente-de-linhares-da-beira-2015/>

The National Parasailing Festival, which happens in the historic village of Linhares da Beira, in the county of Celorico da Beira, where parasailing more than a cause has become a tradition and one more feature of this village, which has grown accustomed and enjoys this sport. It began in 2005, on its way to the 11th edition. During the festival days, there will be various sporting activities, within the components of this sport. The participating pilots come from all over the world, from Sweden to Australia, China to the USA, South Korea to Russia, Japan and Portugal.

Linhares da Beira has been elected as one of the elite spots for parasailing and will attract dozens of the best parasailers, as well as thousands from the

world parasailing community to the sublime landscape of the Estrela Mountains. Considered the parasailing capital, since it gathers unique requirements to the practice of the sport, it allows for a spectacular show to happen, where the skies are filled with all the colors. It happens during the month of August and it is a very important event for the promotion of this historic village. Other than the specific parasailing area, according to the organization, this event aims to provide a set of activities that brings animation to the whole structure, mainly allowing the integration of the people who escort the pilots and the general population. A good example are the sports tournaments, the nature exploring sporting activities, social and cultural

activities and the tours, which are organized, through which is aimed to get to know the historic village of Linhares da Beira and the surrounding region to pilots and the people that come with them.

This year, Linhares da Beira awaits for welcoming two major world events.

Parasailing Festival	2012	2013	2014	2015
No. of teams	16	13	12	26
No. of pilots	85	65	67	210

Chart 5- Number of participants from 2012 to 2015

Source: Own elaboration

5. Characteristics of Tourist's Motivations

When speaking about sports tourism events one has to classify before describing them. There were several classifications made over time, such as those by Weed and Bull (2004) who classified sports tourism in five different categories:

- First, sports with tourism content (involving sport as an incidental activity);
- Second, sports participating tourism (sport as the prime purpose of the trip);
- Third, sports training (the trip's purpose is sports training, both at beginner and advanced level);
- Fourth, sports events (these are the prime motivation for the trip, both as spectator or participant);
- And finally, luxury sports tourism (concerning facilities, accommodation, and services).

However, to pursue this study we selected Gibson's 1998 classification, divided in active and passive, and later improvement in 2011 of Robinson & Gammon previous 1997 classification, which was divided in hard and soft within other categories. Thus, under hard definition, we have both active and passive and under the soft definition there is only the active classification.

The motivation is a major subject in research on tourists; it is a major tool for tourism development.

Tourism is a service characterized by its intangibility, and tourists choose based on their individual needs and wishes, expecting to be satisfied with their choice of a specific destination.

It seems to exist similarities in motivations and behaviours among sport tourists engaged in different activities that may lead to establish a typology of sports tourist types.

Most studies have used the motivation theory by Dann (1981) which simplified in two factors at decision making process level, the pull and push factors. The pull factor concerns the destiny's attractiveness, that is, it explains the external force of the destiny's attributes, relevant in the decision making process. The push factor is related to the individual's emotional aspects. For instance, Hall (1992) referred the importance of some classic tourism studies, such as the push and pull factors, to acknowledge and explain the motives behind sports tourists behaviours.

Sports events tourists' behaviours and motivations are diverse and heterogeneous, depending on the tourist type and intention. One can only be sure that sport is the primary drive and common characteristic of these tourists. In order to study the motivation factors of this type of tourists to take part in sports events we took as our starting point Weed & Bull (2004) characterization, which defend that motivations for sport tourism are related to the unique experience that comes from the interaction of

activity, people and place. Thereby we intend to survey the participants in the above three events, and understand which aspects attract more tourists to an event within the interaction between activity, people and place. To fill in the attributes within each area we undertook a revision of the literature, in order to understand whether other researchers have already carried out this designation, which will be completed with interviews to the event companies' organizers.

According to Weed (2008), "in this issue of the Journal of Sport & Tourism, there are three substantive papers that each considers sports tourism experiences, with each emphasising a different element of the activity, people and place interaction".

Activity - According to Kurtzman & Zauhar (1997) the interactions between the activities carried out while on vacations and considered as sports tourism events have been studied in the literature.

Hinch & Higham (2001) pointed out a potential area for sports tourism research resulting from their structuring of the activity, spatial and temporal dimensions of sport tourism. Positioning sport as the activity dimension and considering the spatial and temporal dimensions derived from tourism.

Focusing on the activity experience, Weed (2008) commented about Hennessey, MacDonald & Maceachern's paper '*A Framework for Understanding Golfing Visitors to a Destination*', (2008) stating that it tried to conclude whether differences exist among golfing tourists' behaviors that would have arisen from their frequency of participation in golf in the previous year. Also, Hennessey, MacDonald & Maceachern's (2008) observed from their research that its results can "inform branding strategies, develop market segmentation models and establish systems of customer relationship marketing". In this manner, the paper shows grounding nature of "work focusing on

sports tourism experiences in informing research into sports tourism planning, provision and marketing".

People - There is a major concern in writing about economic, environmental and social impacts but it is all centered in the persons that generate those impacts.

According to Hinch & Higham (2001), the segmentation of sport tourism requires more attention in future research. They also said that any subject about travel behaviour is very important for tourism providers.

For Gammon & Rawshaw (2013), practicing the sport we have practiced when we were younger, or watching a match in familiar environments may take us back to some moments in the past, spent with family and friends, some of which, perhaps, may no longer be with us. Therefore sporting events may induce non-sporting reflections, related to the way we were in the past as well as triggering memories of the people we have shared periods of our lives with.

With regards to the place experience, Weed (2008) has cited a paper in this issue, by Papadimitriou & Gibson (2008), entitled '*Benefits Sought and Realized by Active Mountain Sport Tourists in Epirus, Greece: Pre - and Post- Trip Analysis*', which elaborates on the destination images of sports tourists, particularly comparing the benefits that active sports tourists sought from their destination experience, and the extent to which they were attained. A specific benefit they could track was sport experience, which allowed for some interaction between place and the activity element. Remarkably, this paper by Papadimitriou & Gibson's (2008) bolster previous suggestions that experiences change over the course of a vacation, not only for the consistency they found between benefits sought and realized (Fridgen, 1984; Pearce, 1982), but also it seems to support the approach suggested earlier in which sports tourism is considered as an experience rather than as a trip purpose.

Place is very important in the context of sport tourism. According to Hinch & Higham (2011), “place was defined as space which has been infused with meaning, and it should be clear now that tourism spaces are increasingly infused with the meaning through sport”.

According to Palrão and Filipe (2016) “in order that this phenomenon evolves smoothly, touristic infrastructures are needed, which can work as a facilitator element when it comes to making a decision on the destination place”.

Standeven & Knop (1999) referred that “the experiences of sport tourists’ - staged or real - result from tourists’ interactions with place”. They also said that the nature of tourism is based in the experience of places different from the tourist homeland. These places’ characteristics are often unique to each one of them and the tourist senses them, as their differences and similarities become part of the tourist’s conscious experience.

Weed and Bull (2004) stated that - apart from elite athletes - who do not choose where to participate - Place is the main issue for the experience.

The last paper referred by Weed (2008) was Shipway & Jones ‘*The Great Suburban Everest: An “Insiders” Perspective on Experiences at the 2007 Flora London Marathon*’ (2008), which looks upon the experiences of marathon runners and it has a qualitative perspective rather than quantitative as the previous ones, since it uses an ethnographic design similar to that used by Green & Chalip (1998) in their study of experiences at a women’s flag football tournament. Shipway & Jones (2008) focus on the people aspect of the sports tourism experience, being interested in studying social identity and using Stebbins serious leisure framework (2007), in which they found key aspects of the experience provided by interactions between people to be the unique philosophy, language and behaviours, often resulting

in similar attitudes, values and even dress codes among the studies group.

6. Discussion and Conclusion

The objective of this paper was to perceive and compile the relevant aspects for the study. First to be able to prove through figures that indeed this is a developing issue with growth potential. Second, since this is a relatively new area about which little has been studied in Portugal, to try and understand how a study could be carried out in such a way as to confirm this development throughout the country and in all sports. The conclusions we can draw and lead us to a few more questions that are liable for discussion are: generally, tourism keeps increasing in most countries and specifically in Portugal, subject of this analysis, where it plays an increasingly important role in the economy, having had a positive evolution, from 3,4% to 4,3% of the GDP between 2012 and 2015 in the travel and tourism scale. This rising trend is due not only, but a lot, to the climate and its topography, which are the main characteristics for sports events and attract tourist for the sports practice in a different scenario. Sports tourism has appeared in the 90’s decade of the 20th century and has been growing steadily ever since. In Portugal, the concept has come up later, already in the 21st century, and began by being a trendy thing to do and not yet defined as a lifestyle to remain.

The various classifications of the sports tourist have been studied by numerous authors, but it becomes somewhat confusing to characterize all the profiles, since the tourist can assume several roles in these conditions, and at times even more than just one. However, the chosen division has been made by Gibson’s (1998), who has defined three major groups: Nostalgia sports tourism, Active sports tourism and Event sports tourism. The study objects are recreational sport tourism events and the area is so recent that there is no available data at all to support our study. This type of practice’s definition

was first referred by Robinson & Gammon (2011) “a soft definition of the sport tourist would be someone who specifically travels to and/or stays in places outside their usual environment for primarily active recreational participation in a chosen sport. The active recreational elements are the distinguishing factors here”. Three events with these characteristics have been chosen in Portugal and also according to Aspás (2000) classification stating that events can occur in water, land and air, based on the number of participants and a questionnaire made to them aimed to farther reach a recreational sports tourism events model, through the motivations and experiences of the tourist, according to Weed & Bull (2004) model. These authors defend that motivations for sport tourism are related to the unique experience that comes from the interaction of activity, people and place, thus allowing the creation of the necessary conditions to promote the sustainable growth of the area’s revenues. All these three events have happened since 2012 and thus the table with the number of participants is comparable. Therefore, it can be stated that in all of them there has been an increase in the number of participants. Whenever the event couldn’t afford more participants, the number of events per year has been increased. In the regatta there was a slight breach in 2013, but it rose again and in parasailing all the editions have been a huge success. Once interviewed, all the three organizers of these events have confirmed a notorious increase in the economic activity at the places where they happened, the days when they occur, since lodging, restaurant business and all the surrounding commercial activity have higher occupancy rates than usual, when compared to the days without events.

Therefore one can only hope that the development of this paper may reach a conclusion that recreational sport tourism events are relevant to our economy and the study of tourist’s motivation

may help give a contribution for the sustainable growth of the industry’s revenue.

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